

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE ZIMBABWE

N.D. MUTIZWA-MANGIZA

**Supplement to *ZAMBEZIA*, 1985
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE ZIMBABWE:

A study of policy with special reference to rural land

by

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PREFACE

This study was started before the legal independence of Zimbabwe on 18 April 1980. It was, nevertheless, clear at the time that the attainment of genuine independence was close. In terms of practical implications, the study was meant to contribute to the anticipated reformulation of development policies following independence. Indeed, a good number of the recommendations made by the study have already been implemented. The most important of these recommendations are to do with the interrelationship between Community Development Policy and land redistribution, the role of District Commissioners (now District Administrators) in rural planning and administration, and the role of the traditional patriarchal system (chiefs and headmen) in rural administration and land management.

This study is essentially concerned with policy evaluation (at national level) of Community Development in pre-independent Zimbabwe, within the wider context of rural-development planning. More localized and detailed treatment of Community Development can be found in the works of Passmore, Weinrich, Holleman and Murphree. Indeed, this study draws on these earlier works for some empirical evidence; and the emphasis of this study is not in providing new empirical information on Community Development, but lies in the balanced evaluation of the policy itself within the wider external reference system of the generally accepted goals of rural-development planning in underdeveloped countries.

I have greatly profited from the help of the following people to whom I wish to express my sincere gratitude; Dr R.B. Riddell and Dr H. West, my graduate research supervisors, both of the Land Economy Department in the University of Cambridge; Mr A.T. Grove of the Geography Department and Mr J. Cathy of the Land Economy Department in the University of Cambridge for constructive comments; Dr Gloria C. Passmore for a good number of useful discussions of this work; Dr S. Agere, Mr B. Sambana and Dr E. Mukonoweshuro for their comments on the manuscript; my wife, Dorothy, and my son, Shingai, for their constant support; and finally Professor R.S. Roberts, the editor of this series.

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January 1983*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. AIMS OF THE STUDY. Community Development Policy was officially adopted in Rhodesia in May 1962. From this date, until after its climax in 1970, it was one of the major rural planning policy instruments in the African Tribal Trust Lands. Prior to its formal adoption by the Rhodesian government, Community Development had been the object of much theoretical and practical study by the United Nations and by the British Colonial Office. Its implementation in many British colonies and former colonial territories was also assisted by the United States' Agency for International Development. This study is a review involving assessment or evaluation of the adoption and implementation of Community Development in Rhodesia.

The essentials which collectively constitute the 'fundamental questions' of policy review in planning policy evaluation have been outlined by Glass.¹

These are:

- (a) The analysis of the history and evolution of ideas implicit or explicit in the planning system. An awareness of their content and genesis is essential for making the planning policy process conscious of itself and for preventing the fossilization of ideas.
- (b) The investigation of the factual evidence and of socio-economic changes relevant to particular planning principles and plans for particular areas. This helps to determine whether or not planning policy objectives or goals were correctly formulated, that is, the determination of the contextual relevance of planning policy.
- (c) The study of planning administration, that is, the interrelationships between planning agencies or the division of functions between and within planning authorities. Since the manner in which a policy or a plan is effected may seriously impinge on its performance (for example, an essentially satisfactory policy might yield negative results owing to hostilities among the population aroused by administrators), an understanding of how planning agencies should operate is of fundamental importance.
- (d) The empirical examination of the results of planning, since the success of any planning policy is ultimately judged by its performance in the 'real world'.

Community Development was officially adopted in Rhodesia as a major instrument for rural development, but few past studies have analysed the policy within this context. Accordingly, this study aims at reviewing

¹R. Glass, 'The evaluation of planning: Some sociological considerations', in A. Faludi (ed.), *A Reader in Planning Theory* (Oxford, Pergamon, 1973), 46 - 7.

Community Development Policy within the context of rural-development planning, and specifically to answer the following questions:

- (i) What were the essential characteristics of Community Development as a planning policy?
- (ii) What was the historical background of its adoption and implementation in Rhodesia?
- (iii) What did the policy achieve, and what lessons can be learnt from its implementation?
- (iv) What were the limitations and failures of the policy, and why?

Questions (iii) and (iv), in particular, are answered within the context and against the generalized assumptions of rural-development planning in underdeveloped countries. Throughout the process of answering these questions, special attention is paid to land policy, or to the 'land question' as it came to be generally called within the context of the particular political economy of Rhodesia at the time.

There are two reasons for this fundamental focus on the 'land question'. Firstly, land policy is one of the most important aspects of rural-development planning in underdeveloped countries; and, secondly, land legislation formed the cornerstone of the racially segregative political economy of Rhodesia. Consequently, the success of any rural-development policy would depend largely on the degree to which it managed to solve the controversial land question; and the next section, by briefly outlining the overall historical political and socio-economic characteristics of Rhodesia, sheds more light on the significance of this land problem.

1.2. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RHODESIA. The direction and progress of rural development in Rhodesia, indeed of every sector of the economy, were largely controlled by the policies of racial segregation adopted by successive European-dominated governments over the ninety years of colonial rule. The British South Africa Company, led by Cecil John Rhodes, first colonized the territory which was to become Southern Rhodesia in 1890 on the authority of a royal charter granted by the British government in 1889. The Ndebele and Shona people rose up against the British settlers in 1896 - 7, but were effectively brought under the settlers' administrative control after their risings were crushed. The B.S.A. Company administered Southern Rhodesia on behalf of the colonial power until 1923, and from the very beginning embarked on a policy of racial segregation by setting aside land for the African population, that is, the Native Reserves. In 1923 the European settlers were granted a degree of administrative autonomy with the establishment of the so-called Responsible Government. The policy of racial segregation was continued, and, in 1931, was greatly reinforced by the promulgation of the Land Apportionment Act (No. 30 of 1930). This Act

perpetuated the Native Reserves (which were to be renamed 'Tribal Trust Lands' by the Land Apportionment Amendment Act, No. 23 of 1962), and was itself the main instrument of racial discrimination.² Thus Community Development was supplementary to a racialistic political economy, entering a stage dominated by racial political strife. This conflict of interests was to become more acute because of rising African nationalism and the illegal unilateral declaration of independence by the European settlers in 1965. By this time racially discriminatory policies were being applied with increasing severity by the Rhodesian Front government under the leadership of Ian Douglas Smith. African nationalist insurgents started guerrilla attacks against the illegal regime in 1965, and from 1971 onwards there was a massive escalation of warfare. The administration of Community Development was thus caught up in the general conflagration, and rural development increasingly assumed paramilitary characteristics, so much so that martial law was ultimately adopted. For this reason this study examines Community Development Policy only up to 1970.

The relevance of this historical summary of the racist political economy of Rhodesia is that the implementation of Community Development was largely focused on the African areas, namely the Tribal Trust Lands, holding nearly 80 per cent of the total Rhodesian rural population, and in the much smaller African Purchase Areas.

Because of the peculiar political economy of the country, certain terms used in this study assume meanings different from their normal use outside Rhodesia. Thus throughout the study, the term 'African' refers to the indigenous Black population, and 'European' refers to the settler population which does, in fact, include some Asians and people of mixed race. The country itself is referred to as Rhodesia rather than Zimbabwe since Community Development was implemented in the pre-independence period.

Following this brief outline of the aims of the study and of relevant background information, the next section will turn to the conceptual framework for policy review and to the method of study used.

²For a summary of Acts regarding land, see Southern Rhodesia, *Second Report of the Select Committee on the Resettlement of Natives* (Sessional Papers, S.C.3, 1960), and Appendix I of this study.

2. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION. When an electrical system breaks down, the task of repairing it is a matter of routine work. The electrician relies on well-understood, theoretically and empirically verified laws with regard to the nature of electrical current, conduction, resistance and so on. The diagnosis of the cause of breakdown in this case is both systematic and relatively straightforward, because of the existence of assumptions well-grounded in coherent theory regarding the operation of an electrical system.

In much the same way, a rural-development planning review, or policy evaluation, must hinge on given assumptions. However, unlike the case of electricity, the assumptions for policy review are neither absolute nor derived from coherent theory. This makes it all the more difficult to remedy, or to 'repair' any malfunctioning planning system, since such remedy ought to be based on policy review.

However, in spite of the lack of any fully coherent theory of planning or of rural development, it is possible, firstly, to devise a conceptual framework by which a policy review can be rendered systematic, if only partially; and, secondly, to identify the basic assumptions upon which much of the rural-development planning in underdeveloped countries is based. The first proposition relates to planning as a general process, and is applicable, theoretically, to all forms of planning or decision-making. The second proposition concerns the long-term goals of rural development in underdeveloped countries upon which there is a wide measure of agreement.

2.2 THE SYSTEMS MODEL OF PLANNING. Various attempts to formulate widely applicable planning models have been made, mainly along the systems paradigmatic lines. The systems model of planning used here is the one postulated in detail by Faludi,³ who starts by distinguishing between the 'theory of planning' or 'procedural theory', and the 'theory in planning' or 'substantive theory'.

Substantive theory is concerned with the actual social processes on which action to change society may be based. It aims to explain such social processes or concepts as population migration, territoriality, perception and spatial patterns of development. Among the models formulated towards the building of such substantive theories are gravity models of intra-urban and inter-urban migration; central-place settlement models; economic input-output models, and so forth.

³A. Faludi, *Planning Theory* (Oxford, Pergamon, 1973).

On the other hand, procedural theory, which is the theory of planning, is concerned with explaining all forms of decision-making and implementation patterns. The systems models of planning is a step towards the gradual building up of such a theory.⁴ More precisely, the systems model of planning assumes that there is a recognizable and logical pattern to which the planning process conforms, and seeks to explain:

- (a) the logical sequence of decision-making in policy formulation and implementation of plans;
- (b) the operation and interrelationship of planning agencies at different levels; and
- (c) what linkages to activate in order to produce desirable change in an acceptable manner.

The systems model of planning, or the 'rational comprehensive model' as Faludi calls it,⁵ is essentially an analogical one based on cybernetics.⁶ It derives from earlier work by Buckley, Deutsch, and Etzioni.⁷ There are basically two sides to the model, that is the 'Stages of Planning' and the 'Structural Interrelationship of Multi-planning Agencies'.

2.2.1. THE STAGES OF PLANNING. Figure 2.1. is a diagrammatic representation of the four stages of planning. The whole planning process is seen as a total system which is composed of various stages or sub-systems of action. These sub-systems, or stages, which together constitute the total entity of the planning process are interconnected by 'information loops' known as 'information feedback loops' in systems terminology.

Stage 1: Problem Definition. It is of the utmost importance that the ends which the planning process aims to achieve be clearly defined, since choice

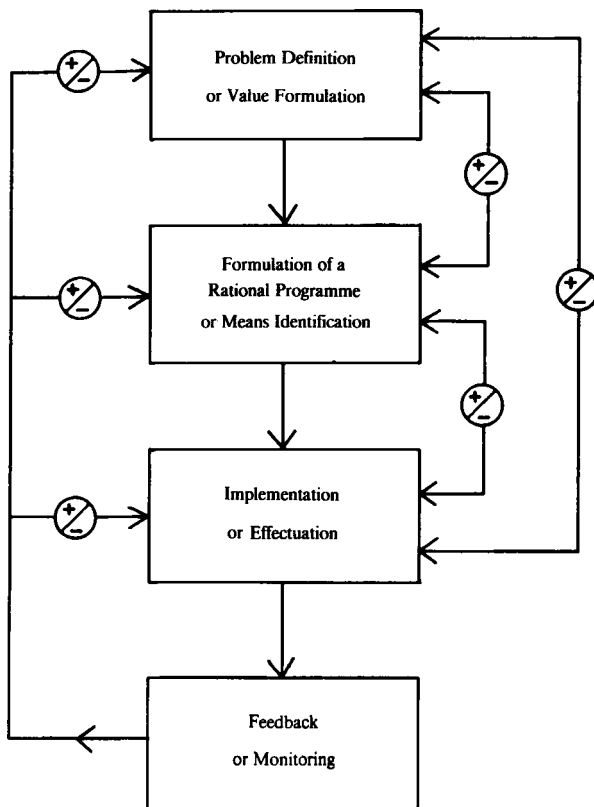
⁴A distinction between 'theories' and 'models' is necessary here. While, on the one hand, theories tell a 'coherent story about natural processes' according to a set of laws on the basis of which both explanation and prediction can be performed, models, on the other hand, are merely representations or simplifications of reality. Thus models are necessarily either less than, or stepping stones towards, theories with regard to explanatory and predictive power. Since most explanatory accounts of decision-making are devoid of explicitly verifiable laws, they can be considered only as models; see A. Ryan, *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (London, Macmillan, 1970), 76 - 97.

⁵Faludi, *Planning Theory*.

⁶'Cybernetics' is originally an engineering term, meaning a comparative study of the automatic control system formed by the nervous system and the brain, and by mechano-electrical communications systems and devices such as computing machines, thermostats and photo-electric sorters. In its general positivistic application in the social sciences cybernetics means the science of communication.

⁷W. Buckley, *Sociology and Modern Systems Theory* (Englewood Cliffs N J, Prentice-Hall, 1962); K. W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control* (London, Macmillan, 2nd edn, 1966); A. Etzioni, *The Active Society* (London, Collier-Macmillan, 1968).

Figure 2.1: STAGES OF PLANNING — A SYSTEMS REPRESENTATION



permeates the whole planning sequence. Davidoff and Reiner emphasize the distinction between 'values' and 'facts' at this stage of planning, which they prefer to call the 'value formulation stage'.⁸ Values are essentially statements of preference (moral or general social goals over which there is wide agreement) and take the form of, x ought to y . On the other hand facts are assertions of the truth of relationships, and take the form of either $x = y$, or if x then y . Facts and values are interconnected in a complicated manner; but generally ends or goals in planning are determined by, or are fundamentally statements of, value. Problem definition, or value formulation, involves assessment of needs among the population on behalf of which planning decisions are being taken, and formulation of general goals on the basis of defined needs and desired future social values.

⁸P. Davidoff and A.T. Reiner, 'A choice theory of planning', in Faludi, *A Reader in Planning Theory*, 11 - 39.

But the assessment of needs among the population is not an easy task. Quite often in social issues reality does not coincide with appearance. The empirically manifest needs ('felt needs' in the case of Community Development in Rhodesia) might be quite different from the latent needs; for the fundamental needs or causes of those needs might lie deeply embedded in the existing socio-economic and political structure. This distinction between 'real' and 'apparent', 'manifest' and 'latent', is important in the context of this study. It will be argued that one of the fundamental failures of Community Development Policy in Rhodesia stemmed from the attempt to separate it from the socio-economic and political structure of the country and from the reluctance to take into account the question of land distribution which, in fact, was the fundamental cause of many felt needs within the Tribal Trust Lands.

The identification of ends and the consideration of their rationality in the context of a given geographical area at any given time is one of the most important tasks of policy review, that is, the determination of the contextual relevance of a given planning policy. Facts may be easy to verify, but this is not so in the case of values. The only way to speak of verification of values is in terms of their consistency with values at other levels. There must be a set of ultimate values which are essentially assumed or asserted as postulates, that is the general social goals. Below this, values can be considered as existing in a hierarchy, and this hierarchical relation of values provides a means for whatever testing of values is possible. A value specific to an individual planning programme may be tested, that is, may be understood, and its reasonableness assessed by considering whether or not it contradicts both the ultimate social values (which may be seen as an external and objective reference system) and other lesser or higher values in the hierarchy.

Stage 2: Formulation of a Rational Programme. Formulation of a rational programme, or 'means identification', as Davidoff and Reiner⁹ call it, involves consideration of all alternatives¹⁰ and then the choice of the best alternative or the best combination of alternatives. This method is more applicable to specific programmes rather than to national-policy planning; for example, the design of a transportation system to cover a given number of rural settlements. In such a case the problem is one of computation, using such decision-making techniques as linear programming or game theory. In the case of national-policy planning and, more specifically, of Community Development Policy in Rhodesia, all that can be done retrospectively is to assess the rationality of the chosen alternative, both as measured against the set of ultimate values and in the context of the prevailing problems at the time of choice.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰For the set of alternatives, Faludi, *Planning Theory*, uses the term 'action space' and Davidoff and Reiner, 'A choice theory of planning', use the term 'universe of alternatives'.

Stage 3: Implemenation or Effectuation. At this stage the institutions, or the planning agencies, through which plans are implemented are established and their functions and interrelationships defined. This stage also involves the allocation of human, material and financial resources, and the establishment of a control system, mainly through legislation. In retrospect, it becomes necessary to consider whether such control measures were 'coercive', 'utilitarian' or 'persuasive', and with what results. Most planning policies aim at establishing 'persuasive' and 'utilitarian' control systems and averting 'coercive' measures.¹¹ Analysis of the structural interrelationship of the multi-planning agencies is also central to any review of the effectuation stage, as explained in more detail in Section 2.2.2. below.

Stage 4: Feedback. Ideally, every planning system should have an in-built feedback mechanism — that is, a means of self-criticism. This enables the planning system to remain 'young' and 'self-conscious'. Such feedback involves the monitoring of the progress and the results of the planning system. The information feedback, as indicated by the feedback loops in Figure 2.1, is either negative or positive. Negative information feedback necessitates the reformulation of possible objectives and long-term goals, as well as of feasible programmes and implementation methods. Positive information feedback means reinforcement of the whole system. This continual reflexive information flow, where each stage reflects back on the previous stages, enables planning to be carried out as a 'process' *vis-a-vis* the 'disjointed incrementalist/blueprint' approach.¹² It is often difficult and always expensive to provide a continuous information feedback system, particularly in underdeveloped countries. Fortunately, in the case of Community Development in Rhodesia, national statistical information is available from a survey conducted in 1968 by the Rhodesian Ministry of Internal Affairs in conjunction with the Political Science Department of the University College of Rhodesia.¹³ This, in fact, is the major source of statistical evidence used below (Sections 5 and 6) in assessing the performance of Community Development Policy. Feedback can also come from sources outside the planning system itself; for example, criticism from the public through pressure groups and other channels, such as news media and independent academic policy studies like the present one. Thus policy review, in attempting to furnish the 'conscience' of the planning system and as a practical contribution to the planning process, must lie within this fourth stage of the planning model.

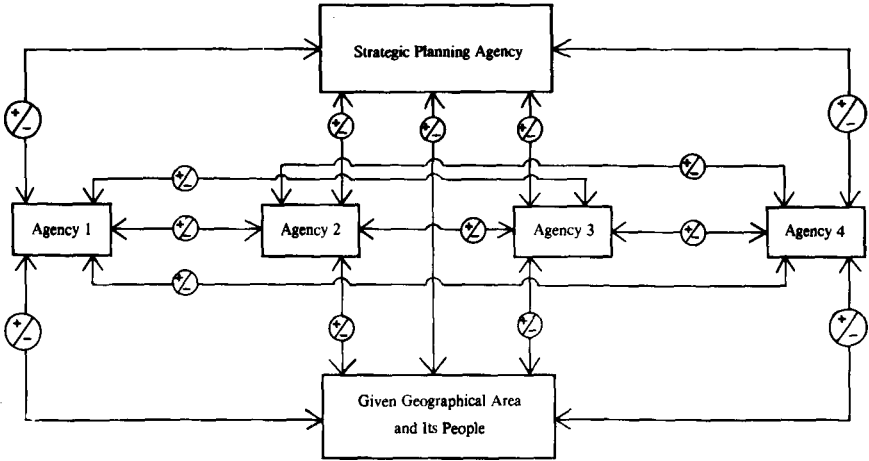
¹¹Faludi, *Planning Theory*, 281 - 90.

¹²*Ibid.*, chs 7, 8.

¹³G.C. Passmore, *The National Policy of Community Development in Rhodesia with Special Reference to Local Government in the African Rural Areas* (Salisbury, Univ. of Rhodesia, Dep. of Political Science, Source Book 5, 1972), 247 - 305.

2.2.2. THE STRUCTURAL INTERRELATIONSHIP OF MULTI-PLANNING AGENCIES. Planning agencies may be described as fitting together in a 'nested hierarchy'. At the top there is the Strategic Planning Agency;¹⁴ in the case of national-policy planning the national government is responsible for defining the ultimate values or general ends of the planning system. The Strategic Planning Agency may also be responsible for personnel-training, allocation of finance and other resources, and the co-ordination of the activities of sub-planning agencies. The sub-planning agencies are devices for the division of labour; thus, in the context of rural-development planning, such agencies might be responsible for specialized functions like health, education, land, agriculture, and public works. Sub-planning agencies focus also on separate geographical areas to solve problems in those areas. As illustrated in Figure 2.2, all the components of the multi-planning-agencies structure are interconnected by information-feedback loops, as in the case of the planning stages. To ensure co-ordination, the various components should consult one another, regulate and encourage one another's activities (negative information feedback and positive information feedback). Friction often arises concerning responsibilities for given areas or activities. This demands that the delegation of functions be pre-eminent in the effectuation of plans. A policy-review study aims to reconstruct the functions and interrelationships of

Figure 2.2: STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIP OF MULTI-PLANNING AGENCIES



the multi-planning agencies, and to examine the effects of any friction. The relevance of this to the implementation of Community Development in Rhodesia will become clear (see below, Section 6) in the analysis of the friction arising out of the role of District Commissioners and Chiefs, all despite the fact that the policy aimed at establishing an integrated or comprehensive rural-planning system.

2.3. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ON RURAL-DEVELOPMENT PLANNING. As pointed out by Smith, 'development is frequently assumed to be an economic condition . . . When not described explicitly as "economic" development, "economic" is often implicitly assumed'.¹⁵ Only recently have serious attempts been made to widen the concept of development beyond purely economic criteria. In this respect, the work initiated by the United Nations' Research Institute for Social Development is important. After expressing doubt over such partial concepts as 'economic development' or even 'social development', Drewnowski stresses the essential unity of the development process:

Development is a process of qualitative change and quantitative growth of the social and economic reality which we call either society or economy. The close interrelationship between economic and social elements precludes any purely social or economic development. It is therefore better not to speak of social development or economic development, but of a single process called simply, 'Development'.¹⁶

The significant points which require emphasis here are, firstly, that development is seen as a 'process' rather than as a 'stage', and, secondly, that development is both quantitative material/economic growth and a process of qualitative social betterment.

In respect of rural development, in particular, a general consensus has been reached over the dimensions and goals of rural development in underdeveloped countries. A useful standard definition was given by the U.N. World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development:

The goal of agrarian reform and rural development is transformation of rural life and activities in all their economic, social and cultural, institutional, environmental, and human aspects.¹⁷

The general dimensions, which are also the general goals of rural-development planning, were then outlined as follows:

¹⁴Faludi, *Planning Theory*, 210 - 12.

¹⁵D.M. Smith, *Human Geography: A Welfare Approach* (London, Edward Arnold, 1977), 203.

¹⁶J. Drewnowski, *On Measuring and Planning the Quality of Life* (The Hague, Mouton, 1974), 94 - 5.

¹⁷World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, *Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action* (Rome, F.A.O., Revised Draft WC RRD/Rev. 1/4, 1979), 5.

Formulation of objectives, strategies and targets concerning the following: commitment of natural, financial, and human resources; rural institutions and people's participation; periodic monitoring of progress to ensure that targets are achieved.

Access to land, water and other natural resources. To ensure this, attention should be paid to the following aspects: reorganization of land tenure; that is, equitable redistribution and organization and security of tenure, tenancy reform and regulation of rural wages where applicable; regulation of changes in customary or cognatic systems of tenure; land consolidation into optimal production units; community control over resources; settlement of unoccupied public lands; and reduction of inter-regional and inter-community inequalities.

People's participation. This involves the following aspects: encouragement of popular and group organization; strengthening of democratic local government; grassroots participation in agrarian reforms; participation in formulation of policy and implementation of projects.

Integration of women in rural development. This necessitates the provision of equality in legal status, access to all social services, opportunities, and full and equal participation in all aspects of rural development.

Access to inputs, markets and services. Such services and inputs include agro-technical divisible inputs such as fertilizers and improved seed; health, educational, and agricultural-extension services; credit facilities, rural markets, transportation and communication systems. In general, this involves the creation and improvement of infrastructure and rural-development institutions. Scientific, technical and social research related to rural development should also be encouraged.

Development of non-farm rural activities. Attention should be directed towards the establishment of rural industries, such as grain milling, tea-processing, cotton ginning and crushing of seeds for oil production; programmes of rural works such as roads and dams, that is, improvement of the infrastructure. Such non-farm rural programmes are necessary, not only for establishing the preconditions for economic growth, but also to help contain the unemployment problem by absorbing both seasonal and non-seasonal surplus labour.

Education, training, extension and health. Priority should be given to the following: educational policies which ensure universal literacy and numeracy and which are relevant to development; provision of trained personnel for agricultural and health-extension services; and broadening the understanding of development issues both among trained personnel and the public. This helps to create a sense of urgency, purpose, and direction.¹⁸

The World Conference further emphasizes the importance of land policy in agrarian reform and programmes of rural development. In most underdeveloped countries where rural population directly dependent on

¹⁸Ibid., 5 - 19.

income from agriculture frequently exceeds 70 per cent of the national total, land policy is a crucial determinant of rural development. Land is the single most important component of the resource-base, if not the only one; and, as Jacoby and Jacoby emphasize, land distribution in particular is the 'determining factor' in rural development:

If a comparison is made between the various measures designed over the years to improve agrarian conditions, it will be seen that the *redistribution of land* is the most spectacular and effective of these, provided that it is accompanied by whatever reforms are necessary under the given circumstances.¹⁹

Thus the most important postulate of the present study is that relative equality of access to the resource-base, that is to land, should be the starting point of any policy of rural development in the underdeveloped countries. It will be argued later, particularly in Section 6, that while Community Development may have met some of the social and human requirements of rural development, it failed to tackle effectively the land question which was at the heart of the underdevelopment of the Tribal Trust Lands in Rhodesia.

2.4. CONCLUSION. The task of policy review is rendered hazardous by the dearth of coherent theoretical criteria against which the formulation and performance of any system of rural-development planning can be measured. Notwithstanding this impediment, it has been proposed in Section 2.2 that the general systems model of planning can be usefully adopted, without necessarily accepting all that it entails, as a framework for policy review. It points out the more general questions that must be asked of the structure and conduct of any planning system.

Thus in any review of Community Development Policy in Rhodesia, it is vital that the following general questions be considered:

What were the development problems identified and objectives or goals set by the policy, and what were the social values enshrined within the policy? How was the policy formulated; that is, what were the historical precedents, rationale and method of means identification?

How was the policy implemented and administered, and with what effects? What were the achievements and failures of the policy?

In asking the last question, in particular, it is necessary to do so not only in the context of the objectives internally defined by the policy but also in the context of the external objective reference system; that is, the generally accepted goals of rural-development planning in underdeveloped countries within which land distribution in particular is of crucial importance. Sections 3 and 4 concentrate on the first three questions, and Sections 5 and 6 on the last.

¹⁹E.H. Jacoby and C.F. Jacoby, *Man and Land: The Fundamental Issue in Development* (London, André Deutsch, 1971), 170.



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